

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 were submitted for examination and remain in the case.

Claims 1-5, 7-8, 10-15, 17-18, and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0012445 by Perry (hereinafter "Perry") in view of U.S. Patent 5,594,838 to Christopher (hereinafter "Christopher").

REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-5, 7-8, 10-15, 17-18, and 20 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The examiner rejected claims 1-5, 7-8, 10-15, 17-18, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Perry and Christopher. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

35 U.S.C. 103(a), which forms the basis for the rejection, states in pertinent part:

...such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious **at the time the invention was made** to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains.

Applicants respectfully assert that the subject matter of the claimed invention would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention because Perry was not known to the public at the time of the invention. Perry was filed on February 2, 2001. The claimed invention has a filing date of October 17, 2000, nearly 4 months prior to Perry.

Applicants therefore respectfully assert that the rejection under U.S.C. § 103(a) is improper, and that claims 1-20 are in condition for prompt allowance.

Should additional information be required regarding the traversal of the rejections of the dependent claims enumerated above, Examiner is respectfully asked to notify Applicants of such

need. If any impediments to the prompt allowance of the claims can be resolved by a telephone conversation, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian C. Kunzler', written over a horizontal line.

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